Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 22, line 8 with the following amended paragraph:

The coefficient calculation circuit 11 thus produces a contrast correction coefficient $g(i, j)$ by arithmetic processing of the following expression (6):

$$g(i, j) = G(r(i, j)) \qquad ... (6)$$

Thus, when the signal level of the low frequency component $r(i, j)$ which is an input level is in an area lower than a predetermined reference level Lk, the coefficient calculation circuit 11 outputs a contrast correction coefficient $g(i, j)$ of a fixed value gmax higher than 1, but when the signal level of the $f(i, j)$ is in another area equal to or higher than the reference level Lk, the coefficient calculation circuit 11 output a contrast correction coefficient $g(i, j)$ which gradually ~~increases~~ decreases to a value gmin in response to the signal level of the low frequency component $r(i, j)$.